

Agricultural Marketing Service
Deputy Administrator for Marketing Program Operations
Cotton Division
Marketing Services Office
Computer Operator, GS-332-4

SJ CN1

I. INTRODUCTION

This position is located in a Marketing Services Office, Cotton Division, Agricultural Marketing Service. The Marketing Services Offices are responsible for Cotton Division programs which include classification of cotton; collection and dissemination of market news on cotton, cottonseed, and linters; statistical procedures incident to quality estimates of the cotton crop and the annual carryover; services to organized cotton improvement groups; and establishment and maintenance of cooperative relations with the cotton industry.

The incumbent operates the computer system and peripheral equipment in the Marketing Services Office.

II. MAJOR DUTIES

The incumbent operates a small stand-alone computer system which consists of a control console, central processor containing control and utility programs, a disk drive, a card reader, and peripheral equipment such as key punch, card sorter, high speed printer, and decollator.

The employee:

Activates system control programs and associated input by entering prescribed commands into the console.

Monitors machine processing.

Takes prompt action in response to programmed instruction, machine failure, etc.

Enters commands for various programs to produce a variety of reports.

Loads and unloads disks; transfers information from permanent to floppy disk; and if floppy disk is damaged, makes new floppy disk from permanent disk.

Identifies equipment problems such as hung tapes, or failure to respond to key-in commands and attempts to correct by standardized procedures.

As advised by Technical Services Division Specialists or computer technical representatives, enters commands, makes minor mechanical adjustments and similar actions to correct problems, and reports success or failure of actions to the technical representative.

Searches printed error messages, identifies source of errors, and punches correction cards.

operates and monitors peripheral equipment such as key punch machines, high speed printers, and decollators.

III. FACTORS

1. Knowledge Required By the Position:

Knowledge of basic, standardized and frequently used rules and procedures used to start the computer system, monitor the operations in progress and resolve commonly recurring operating problems.

Knowledge of the job control language used in the Cotton system required for setting up the jobs, completing job entry card decks, and correcting control errors.

Knowledge of and skill in operating peripheral equipment.

Ability to interpret error messages and correct control problems and data entry problems.

2. Supervisory Controls:

The employee is under the general supervision of the Office Assistant who provides general guidance on such issues as frequency of output and desired deadlines. The computer operator works independently without specific instructions and makes minor adjustments in tape drives or card readers, and corrects errors based on experience and past practices. Finished work is reviewed for timeliness and accuracy.

3. Guidelines:

A variety of manufacturer, TSD, and Cotton Division manuals are available to describe operating procedures and correcting problems in the equipment. Guidelines cover the majority of situations normally encountered; however, the operator may have to use judgment in applying the guidelines to specific situations. Unusual or complex situations not covered by the instructions are referred to the supervisor.

4. Complexity

The employee performs specific repetitive tasks that are directly related. The same operating systems, programs and equipment are operated on a daily basis and the majority of error and problem conditions are recurring. Corrections are normally obvious.

5. Scope and Effect

The operator performs a narrow range of duties composed of data entry, central processing, tape and disk drives, card readers, and control consoles used in receiving, organizing, and storing information for a large volume of cotton classing data. This data is used for recording official classes for specific bales of cotton, compiling statistical information, and preparing billing documents and other management reports for the Marketing Services Office.

6. Personal Contacts

Personal contacts are with other employees in the MSO, representatives of the trade, computer system technical representatives, and Computer Specialists from the AMS Technical Services Division.

7. Purpose of Contacts

The purpose of the contacts is to provide information concerning the status of a run, specific information from the data base, equipment problems, or to explain established work procedures.

8. Physical Demands

The work is usually sedentary, although it requires some walking, standing, bending, and lifting of light items.

9. Work Environment

The work area is adequately lighted and ventilated. The work involves the common risks or discomforts requiring normal safety precautions typical of offices.